

i can't fight this feeling (but i can fight you) by daidalos_ikaros

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

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Summary:

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"Look, I'm done with you!"

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"I said we're done," Steve says, and he doesn't look at Billy, "at least until you see all the things you're doing wrong, man. I'm sorry."

"All the things I'm...? What the fuck? I don't think you were saying that last night." Steve turns to look at him, half an ironic smirk on his face.

"Oh, no, this has nothing to do with sex, Billy, don't let it hurt your pride," he says, sarcasm dripping from his words. "It has to do with your damn attitude towards others, okay? You can't play the 'I was bullied as a kid' part for me, man. I was there like you, and something like this," he points to the space between them, "made me snap out of it."

Billy holds his cigarette between his lips and shoots a raging gaze to the sky. Steve, who has aged ten years in the last eighteen months, just rolls his eyes and goes away. He lets Billy think.

Billy should have seen it coming, to be honest. How much of a relationship do you have if you don't let the other person see you? But he has way too much pride to admit he's wrong, and let's not even talk about *reflecting* on why is he wrong.

So he gets home to a silent house, and empties half a bottle of whiskey in his stomach and the rest of his cigarettes in his lungs before passing out on the couch.

Steve does think about it. He asks himself if he's done the right thing, but, honestly, he couldn't stand this fake Billy he's been given anymore. He insults and he hurts everything and everyone Steve loves just because he can't let himself *care*, and a person who does not care is not someone with whom Steve wants to be.

He talks to Nancy and Jonathan a lot, too, now that their feelings are sorted out. They tell him he did the right thing and then hug him because they think he deserves it. He cries through it. Steve thinks that if Billy had *this* he wouldn't have to hide himself, but then again, Steve offered him this and Billy didn't want to take it.

Billy wakes up to the worst headache he's ever had and an even more silent house. He downs an aspirin and thinks.

Steve wakes up to his doorbell ringing. He doesn't get his hopes up though. And he's right, because it's Jonathan, who brings him two mixtapes, "in case he thinks about it, becomes a better human being," he hands him one, the case says 'love songs for two proud shits', and Steve smirks, "and just in case he hurts you or doesn't come back," and the second mixtape has 'the monster hunting squad has your back' written, and Steve hugs Jonathan so hard he thinks he's not gonna survive it.

Billy doesn't have lunch that day. He plays rock and smokes and thinks.

The next couple of hours Steve gets a visit from Nancy and the kids. They bring him lunch and some movies and they play them all while eating.

Billy can't think anymore. He has to *do*.

Steve, Nancy and the kids hear a knock in the door as they are preparing to go. Steve opens for them to leave as much as for the person knocking to come in, except he doesn't expect Billy. He blocks for a second, the kids tell him goodbye with big smiles and shoot deadly glances at Billy. Nancy hugs him and whispers in his ear "the alternative title for the second mixtape was 'we'll break his legs'," kisses his cheek and leaves to bring all the children home.

"Hey."

"Hello, Billy."

"I've been... thinking about what you said." Steve arches an eyebrow. "And I think you were right. I've been an asshole these months and I... I haven't done anything at all so that you could maybe see me. Like me."

"Wanna come in?" Steve says, and opens the door wider.

It looks like a peace offering. Billy forces himself to humble and go in.

"I... I think you were right," he says.

"You already said that. Is it gonna change anything, though?" Steve asks, dead serious.

"Well, if you're gonna be with your damn defenses up all the fucking time it won't," Billy spits, and Steve can't do but smile ironically.

"Oh, so I'm the one with my defenses up? Well, I let you in, at least, huh? You've seen me banged up, seen me cry and laugh and I told you about me. I told you about Eleven and the Upside Down. You know what scares me and what I love. I don't know much about you apart from your last name, man. You think you're strong, so strong you can hurt anyone, insult anyone around you and it won't matter, you're too cool for friends. I'll tell you one thing. I was like you and I ended up with no friends, no love, nothing. It's not pretty."

"It's not my fault you're friends with weirdos and kids, Steve."

"You think you're better than them? Because you're what? A man? Because you're "normal"? Or *white*? You wanna be like that? All right. I'm just not letting that bullshit near me."

"It's not bullshit."

"Isn't it? You think you're harder than Nancy, the pretty girl you think is stupid? She shot the demogorgon down, after losing her best

friend. That weirdo, Jonathan? He saved my life. All of the kids have been in near death experiences, Will has been sucked into an alternate reality, El has superpowers, Dustin is more intelligent than I'll ever be, Mike thought his best friend was dead for *months* and Lucas? He charged against a secret government agency on his own. With a *slingshot*. You think you're better than any of them because you smoke and drink and lift instead of playing Dungeons and Dragons? Well flash news, Billy, you're just being an idiot!"

"I... I didn't... I didn't think..." Steve snorts, ironic.

"No, of course you didn't. Because just at the end of this grievance list there's just one last word you can't seem to stop yourself from saying: faggot. Guess what, Billy? You're a faggot too. Just like me."

"I'd never call you..."

"What does it matter if you tell it to someone else!? You think just because you don't direct that insult to me particularly that it hurts less? Because yes, Billy, every time you insult someone, guess what happens? They get hurt. Let it sink."

"I never intended to hurt anyone," Billy says, but it sounds fake and even he makes a grimace when he says it. Steve makes a face that says 'you're missing the point'.

"C'mon, Billy, you can't tell me that and make me believe it. I know you intended to hurt people. But I'm not holding you accountable for the past. I'm just asking you to change your attitude in the future. Just that."

"I'd never..." he pauses, looks away. Lights up a cigarette and Steve sees the coping mechanism in the way he fidgets with his lighter before giving the cigarette a first drag. "I'd never thought about it, to be honest. Never cared enough. I didn't think I was, you know, *better* than them but at the same time I maybe did, because I've been raised to think like that. But I'm old enough to think by myself and I didn't. I knew I was being hurtful and offensive and unfair, and all of that, but I didn't care. Up until you, okay?" Steve opens his mouth, but Billy shuts him with a gesture. "No, you talked enough already, Harrington. My turn. You arrive into my life, damn supermodel and a

heart of gold, and I'm supposed to match you? Yeah, not gonna happen. But you... you motherfucker somehow choose *me*, and I'm still tryna wrap my head around that, and then you go away because I'm not a good person and trust me, I know, all right? I know damn well I'm never in my life gonna be half as kind as you are. But I can learn. And I'm not saying it's all gonna change and that I'm suddenly gonna be the most respectful person in the whole fucking world but I'm willing to try. Because the last 24 hours have been the worst of my life, I'd never felt as lonely as this, never as scared. And all because you stupid, *stupid boy*, told me it was over. Well I hope it ain't because I don't know how I can live without you now that I've known your peace."

"It's definitely, definitely not over," Steve smiles, and throws one last metaphorical punch that King Steve would have loved because it hits home but hated because it makes him vulnerable. "I think I love you, Hargrove."

Billy's breath hitches. Steve looks at him, mullet and tight jeans, shirt open past his breastbone, golden medals against his chest and a cigarette hanging from his lips, the embodiment of a bad boy. Billy looks down for a moment and then right into Steve's eyes, and he doesn't remember if they've ever looked at each other so plainly, if their gazes had ever been so transparent. "I think I love you too," Billy says, and Steve's heart does three somersaults in his chest.

The tension maintains for a moment, just as they look into each other's eyes and then Steve is whispering "take that cigarette out of your mouth," and Billy's half smirk makes a comeback as he obeys just to meet his lips in an urgent kiss. But then Steve is drawing away and stumbling through the room.

"Wait... wait, man."

"What now, Steve? Gonna cream your pants?" Billy says, all jokes and reminiscence, and Steve laughs as he gets the mixtape into the reader.

REO Speedwagon's *Can't fight this feeling* comes up and Steve makes a mental note to congratulate Jonathan for the accuracy.

And he kisses Billy.

And then once again.

And again.

And again.